

**THE  
CHILDREN**

**The Need - Who Are The Children - Who Can Adopt  
The Adoption Process - How to Apply - Training - Confidentiality**

**The Need**

In California alone, there are nearly 100,000 children in the foster care system. Over 70,000 of these children will never return to their family of origin. They are waiting for the one thing they need the most: a permanent, loving family. Without this permanence, their future is grim. Children age out of the system at 18 years of age into a world for which few of us would be prepared at that age. Many will not complete high school. Most will be under employed or will have difficulty keeping a job. And over half will be homeless or incarcerated within two years. The need is urgent.

**Who are the Children?**

They are very special children, and they all have special needs. They are children who have been abused and neglected, may have been exposed to drugs and alcohol before birth, or who have experienced a wide range of traumas. The children who need permanent families in California are primarily African-American and Latino. They may be part of sibling sets of 2, 3, 4, or more. Most of them are age 6 and older.



Children are usually not able to talk about their experiences, so if they have had traumatic experiences they might exhibit behaviors such as temper tantrums, crying inconsolably, overeating, hitting, withdrawing, or sexual acting out. This is what we mean by "special needs." All of the children we place are court dependants; they are referred by the County or State Departments of Social Services. You can learn about specific issues in our

**Glossary of Adoption Terms.**
**Who Can Adopt?**

- People who rent an apartment can adopt.
- Single men and women can adopt.
- Gay and lesbian families can adopt.
- People with moderate incomes can adopt.
- People who speak only Spanish can adopt.

We are looking for people with big hearts and a love of children, whose employment, housing, relationships, and health are stable. You must be able to provide for your family, and ensure that children of opposite genders will not share a bedroom, and have no more than two children per bedroom.



#### What is the Process for Adopting a Waiting Child and How Long Will it Take?

1. Call us at 510-272-0204. We'll talk to you a little bit, tell you about the children and our process, ask you a few questions, and tell you when our next orientation is. Or, if you wish, you may download a simple .pdf form by [clicking here](#). Fill it out and fax it to 510-272-0277 or email it to [kids@familybuilders.org](mailto:kids@familybuilders.org). We'll call you and let you know when we will have our next orientation so you can learn more about the children and the process.
2. Come to an orientation. Orientations in English are held on the 1 st Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m., and in Spanish on the 2 nd Saturday of each month, also at 10:00 a.m. Feel free to bring a person to whom you will be looking for support during and after the process. You'll learn more about what it is like to adopt a child who is waiting and who has special needs. One of our social workers will talk with you about the process, how long it takes, and what is required. Of course, there is time for your questions as well.
3. If you decide to continue the process, fill out and return the Family Fact Sheet. [Click here](#) to download a pdf version of the Family Fact Sheet. You may return the Fact Sheet by mail or fax it to 510-272-0277, or via email at [kids@familybuilders.org](mailto:kids@familybuilders.org).
4. After we receive your Fact Sheet, you will come in for a personal interview. We will discuss the type of child which would be the most appropriate match for your family, and we will begin to get to know you. We will ask about who lives in your home, what you do for work and fun, how your extended family might feel about your decision to adopt, your beliefs about child rearing and more.
5. After the interview, the Program Director will contact you and let you know about the social worker who will be assigned to work with your family, and you will be invited to participate in our training program. While you are going through the training process, you will also be completing the required paperwork and meeting with your social worker for home study interviews. The home study consists of a series of visits with you during which we ask you questions so we may make a thorough assessment of such issues as your:

- marital and relationship history
- living environment
- growing up history
- mental health
- education and work history

- references
- why you want to adopt
- knowledge of child development
- understanding of adoption issues

You will need to be fingerprinted, and we will ask you for a self assessment of your ability to parent a child with special needs. The home study is our way of getting to know you even better so we may assess your unique strengths and areas where you may need help later on in the process. We use this information to match you with a child whose needs you can meet. This part of the process usually takes 4 to 6 months.

6. After your training is finished and your home study has been approved, it is time to begin the search for your child!
7. Once you and your social worker agree that your family can meet the needs of the child you have identified, you will meet with the child's social worker and be given as much information about the child as is available.
8. You will be given some time to think about what you have heard. If you decide to go ahead with the process, we will set up an initial meeting and a schedule for visitation with the child.
9. After the visitation period, the child will be placed in your home as a foster child, (this is why we call the process fost-adopt) and we will work with you to insure the best possible transition for your entire family.
10. As you await finalization of your adoption, we will assist you in negotiating the Adoption Assistance Program fees which you will receive from the federal, state and county governments to assist you until the child reaches 18 years of age.

#### How to Apply

It's easy! Call us at 510-272-0204. We'll talk to you a little bit, tell you about the children and our process, ask you a few questions, and tell you when our next orientation is. Or, if you wish, you may download a simple .pdf form by [clicking here](#). Fill it out and fax it to 510-272-0277 or email it to [kids@familybuilders.org](mailto:kids@familybuilders.org). We'll call you and let you know when we will have our next orientation so you can learn more about the children and the process.

#### The Training Process

The children served by Family Builders and the families who adopt them come from a variety of difficult backgrounds. Children with histories of prenatal drug exposure, neglect, physical and sexual abuse bring challenges to even the most committed and loving parents. Our initial training sessions give families insight to the complexities of early abuse and trauma as well as new ways of helping children heal and thrive.

Family Builders uses the Foster/Adopt P.R.I.D.E. Training Model. PRIDE stands for Parent's Resource for Information, Development and Education. This was developed as part of a national collaborative effort initiated by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Child Welfare League of America. Many other agencies provided substantial contributions to this training curriculum.

The training is 20 hours long and consists of three Saturdays 9a.m. to 3p.m. and one evening 6p.m. to 8p.m.

- **Meeting one:** Understanding the PRIDE model, working as part of a team towards permanence, strengthening family relationships, continuing family relationships, and planning for change.
- **Meeting two:** Meeting children's developmental needs in the areas of attachment and loss, racial and cultural awareness in adoption.

- **Meeting three:** Meeting children's developmental needs in the area of discipline, mandated child abuse reporting requirements, Family Builders parent manual and regulatory compliance.
- **Panel:** An opportunity to meet with an experienced adoptive parent(s), and adult children who have left the foster care system to hear about their experiences, perspectives and to ask questions.

#### **Confidentiality**

We want you to know that confidentiality is one of our highest priorities. We understand that during the home study process you will be trusting us with information that is sensitive and confidential, and we guard that information carefully. We will reveal nothing without your written permission. In addition to our respect for your confidences, Federal Law is very specific about confidentiality for both your family and the children with whom we work.

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